

*A Natural Wonder of the World*



**DESTINATION GUIDE TO**

*Victoria Falls*

**EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED TO KNOW  
WHEN VISITING VICTORIA FALLS**

**TONY AND BOO PEEL**

# About this Quick Guide

This Free Quick Guide to Victoria Falls is jammed full with information and answers to the common questions we get asked over and over every day. When you are setting off or planning on going to a completely new destination you have absolutely no idea where things are or how they work, what's good and what's bad, this guide will hopefully give you a much better understanding of the Victoria Falls area.

If you feel that you are still uncertain about some things, you might want to purchase our [Destination E Guide To Victoria Falls](#) which is much more detailed and includes a whole host of extras like:

- **The Activity Fact File** - a comprehensive information booklet about ALL the activities on offer by ALL of the different tour operators. It's Not a Sales Brochure from a single company. It's solid, straight forward information.
- **Important TIPS** in every section - these will SAVE YOU money, time and frustration
- **Not so well known things To Do and See** - a selection of our local recommendations of things you can do, mostly free that you won't find in any travel agency.
- **Ndebele Language guide** - a quick guide to help you communicate in the local language for basic day to day requirements.
- **Up-to-date Area and town centre map** – detailing all the important stuff.
- **Slide-show** of 30 lovely pictures of the Falls to music.
- **30 high quality photographs** of Victoria Falls in case yours don't turn out that well.
- **Bird and mammal checklist** - Includes 56 mammal species and 440 bird species that you can see in the Victoria Falls region. Rare specials endemic to Victoria Falls have been highlighted for easy reference.
- **Tour of the Falls (includes a map)** – this will enhance your time spent at the actual waterfall. Detailing all the viewpoints and what you are likely to see from each one. We have also included facts and history and some information on the more common flora and fauna which you are likely to see.

[To Find Out More Click Here](#)

The advantage that electronic guides have over hard copy guide books is that this information is being continually updated and improved as changing regulations and circumstances take place in Zimbabwe. The version you have downloaded is current, accurate and we are confident that you can rely on the information as being correct and up to date.

The other advantage is that you can print it as many times as you like, you can scribble on the pages and make notes and highlight the activities that are of particular interest to you. Or you can read it on your phone any time.

We have checked and re-checked for spelling and grammatical errors, please excuse us if you find any. We have used British English because that is what Zimbabweans use. Words like Travelling or Colour might look misspelt, but they are nevertheless correct.

The information contained in this guide is for the **Zimbabwean side of Victoria Falls**. The Zambian side would require a whole separate guide, as the two countries are quite different.

Thank you for downloading this guide, we hope that you find this information useful and that you have a great holiday.

Best wishes

*Tony and Boo*

# How to Use This Book

The Table of Contents on the next page is self explanatory; it's an index of what's contained in this book. While viewing this e book on your computer you can click on any of the headings in the Table of Contents and you will skip to that page. Once printed out those links obviously don't work anymore but just like any other book it is easy enough to find what you are looking for by the page numbers.

While viewing in Adobe I find it easier to click on the little bookmark icon in the left hand column which opens an index that helps you to navigate your way around.

There are also hyper-links throughout the guide (blue text). Clicking on these will take you through to more in-depth information on our site or to relevant information in this guide.

A lot of the information contained here will be useful to you once you are at Victoria Falls. So my suggestion would be to print the whole booklet and take it with you.

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## Zimbabwe vs Zambia

The first big question that confronts many people when considering a visit to Victoria Falls is **“which country should I go to, Zimbabwe or Zambia?”** For those of you who are not familiar with the geography here; the Zambezi River which creates the magnificent Victoria Falls is the border between these two countries. It is therefore possible to see the Falls from either country but deciding on which one can hugely impact your experience and your wallet.

We would just like to highlight a few fundamental differences between the two so you can make your own decision.

### Zimbabwe Pros and Cons

- 75% of the Falls are seen from the Zimbabwean side, with 16 viewpoints bisecting the rainforest. A network of paths allows you to thoroughly see the Falls from every angle.
- A true rainforest, where it rains 24hrs, 365 days of the year, from the falling spray created by these powerful Falls.
- In Zimbabwe the Falls never dry up even at the height of the dry season in October and November. Main Falls and Devils cataract will still have impressive water flow.
- Prices for accommodation and activities are lower than Zambia due to lower government taxes and levies.
- Most of the popular activities can be done in either country; however Microlight flights, Devils swim and Livingstone Island tour can only be done in Zambia. Game viewing opportunities are better in Zimbabwe
- Development on the banks of the Zambezi River upstream of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe has been carefully controlled. Almost the entire stretch of river from Victoria Falls to Kazungula +/- 80 kms is pristine National Park filled with wildlife.
- The town of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe is situated less than one kilometre away from the Falls. This means that many of the Hotels and Lodges are within close striking distance of the Falls. Victoria Falls is a much smaller town than Livingstone, Zambia and everything seems to be more convenient and accessible.
- Zimbabwe entry visas are more expensive than in Zambia and more nationalities require them.

### Zambia Pros and Cons

- Zambia has only a 25% view of the Falls - the eastern cataract. There is a reasonable network of paths and several viewpoints covering this small section. One of the advantages is that you can look right down the length of the Falls at Sunset and yet be close enough to the exit gate to get out quickly before they close them.
- No true rainforest on this side as there are times of the year when the water flow is very low or has completely stopped.
- At the height of the dry season the Zambian Section the eastern cataract dries up completely leaving just a rock face.
- Prices for accommodation and activities are higher than Zimbabwe due to higher government taxes and levies.
- Development on the banks of the Zambezi River upstream of Victoria Falls over the years has had less control than Zimbabwe and many farms and developments exist.
- Zambian visa entry fees are cheaper than Zimbabwe and fewer nationalities require them.
- The town of Livingstone is situated about 10 kms from the entrance to the Falls, if you are staying in a Lodge or Hotel in Livingstone you will incur extra costs in getting to the various activities or to see the Falls.

- Livingstone island tours are only available from the Zambian side, this is a highly recommended activity as you get to see the Falls from a completely different angle, right on the edge exactly where David Livingstone saw it for the first time.
- Most of the popular activities can be done in either country, however Microlight flights, Devils swim and Livingstone Island tour can only be done in Zambia. Game viewing opportunities are better in Zimbabwe
- Zambia has a hydroelectric station which draws water from the Zambezi River above Victoria Falls. At low water levels when this is switched on the eastern cataract can suddenly dry up.

So there you have it a few of the major differences between the two countries. If you have the opportunity, time and money to see Victoria Falls from both countries, that is obviously first prize, as you get a different perspective from each side, the different viewpoints, angle to the sun etc.

If you are only able to visit one country I would have to recommend Zimbabwe as it has a superior section of the Falls, better locality and wildlife opportunities. If you end up going to Zambia at the height of the dry season all you will see is an impressive but dry rock face and I feel you will be slightly disappointed.

In conclusion, if you see the Falls from Zimbabwe only you can be confident that you have seen the best of the Falls, if you see them from Zambia only, I am sorry but the same can't be said.



# Travel Information

## Important Contact Numbers

Victoria Falls International access code: +(263) (83) (followed by the number)

All numbers given below exclude the international and local dialling codes detailed above.

- **The Health Bridge Medical Centre** 2846635 Email [vicfalls@thehealthbridge.org](mailto:vicfalls@thehealthbridge.org)
- **Victoria Falls Pharmacy** 2844403
- **Police** Emergency/Enquiries 2842206 C.I.D 2844201
- **Airport** 2841576 or 2844255 or 2844428 or 2844554
- **Zambezi National Park Entrance** 2842294 or 2844566
- **Victoria Falls National Park - Entrance gate to the Victoria Falls** 2842204
- **Customs and Immigration (Victoria Falls Bridge)** 2845876 or 2844235
- **Victoria Falls Guide** Cell +(263) 778 732 841

## Requirements upon entry

- Some Nationalities require an Entry Visa – for details refer to our webpage [Zimbabwe Visa](#)
- Passport valid for at least 6 months from date of entry,
- Return ticket to your country (or enough money to buy one)
- Enough blank pages in your passport to fit the required entry visas (one full page per visa).

## Requirements to bring a vehicle into Zimbabwe for holiday purposes

- Original or Police certified copy of vehicle registration book and a **certified** letter of permission to use the vehicle if the registration book is not in the drivers name.
- Non Zimbabwe vehicles pay a Carbon Tax valid for 30 days. Cost depends on engine size.

Below 1500cc US\$6

1501 to 2000cc US\$11

2001 to 3000cc US\$15

3001cc and above US\$30

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Insurance - cost approx US\$30 for the 1 month. Purchase at the border.
- T.I.P - (Temporary Import Permit) No Charge. Issued at the border
- C.V.G (Commercial Vehicle Guarantee) About \$120 for Hire Vehicles
- Road Access Fee – US\$10 per light vehicle per entry into the country. Purchase at the border.
- Zimbabwe law requires that all vehicles have 2 x white round reflective tape on the front bumper and 2 x 6 inch red reflective tape on the rear bumper. You can get fined if you don't have these.
- New law (effective June 2011) states that vehicles must have two red warning triangles and a fire extinguisher with SAZ ( Standards Association of Zimbabwe) approval. [Full details](#)



**Tip 1:** Carry your driver's licence and vehicle entry documents (specifically the Temporary Import Permit (T.I.P) and Zimbabwe Insurance) with you at all times, to avoid any hassles.



**Tip 2:** Pay for all the above charges in US\$ cash as opposed to other currencies. If fees are converted to other currencies, it will be done at an unfavourable exchange rate for you and will cost you more money.

## Import allocations

We don't want to stick our necks out here, so these allocation details are only a guideline. This is a bit of a grey area and a lot will depend on the customs official on the day and his mood.

- Beer – reasonable personal consumption
- Wine – 5 litres
- Spirits – reasonable personal consumption
- Meat – 25 kgs
- Cash – US\$ 5000.00

The official [Zimra Website](#) (Zimbabwe Revenue Authority) has very useful up to date information on Zimbabwe customs and immigration, duties and taxes.

## Zimbabwe Entry Visa

Depending on your nationality, you may be required to obtain a visa to enter Zimbabwe. Please read the information below carefully to understand what applies to you and how to proceed.

Zimbabwe classifies travellers into three visa categories:

### Category A – No Visa Required

- Nationals of Category A countries **do not require a visa** to enter Zimbabwe.
- You will be granted entry at the border without needing to pay any visa fees.
- An **Immigration Declaration Form** must still be completed.
- You can fill in the form manually on arrival, but we recommend completing it online to save time: [Immigration Declaration Form \(online\)](#)

### Category B – Visa on Arrival or Pre-Application

- Nationals of Category B countries **can obtain a visa at the port of entry** (land borders or airports).
- You now have the option to **pre-apply online** using the new system: [Online Visa Application and Immigration Declaration Form](#)
- Once completed, your visa will be approved instantly. When your passport is scanned at immigration, your visa will be stamped with no further delays.
- You can pay online during the application (recommended), but if that fails, payment can still be made on arrival using cash or card. Your application will be on the system
- If you don't pre-apply, you'll need to fill in the online form at the counter on arrival, which will delay your entry process.
- Visa options available:
  - a) Single Entry
  - b) Double Entry
  - c) Multiple Entry
  - d) KAZA Univisa

### Category C – Visa Required Before Travel

- Nationals of Category C countries **must obtain a visa in advance** of travel.



- Apply online here:  
[Online Visa Application and Immigration Declaration Form](#)
- These applications are not approved immediately, but you'll be notified once your visa is granted.


**Find your Visa Category** according to your Nationality and their associated cost on our website [Zimbabwe Visa](#)

### Passport Requirements for ALL visitors

- A passport valid for at least **6 months** from your date of entry
- At least **two blank pages** in your passport
- Proof of a **return ticket** (or funds to purchase one)
- **Sufficient funds** to cover your stay in Zimbabwe

### What are the Zimbabwe Visa Types?

- **Single Entry Visa** - Allows one entry into Zimbabwe. Once you exit, the visa cannot be reused. Valid for 1 month.
- **Double Entry Visa** - Allows two entries. Valid for 1 month from the date of issue. Once both entries are used, the visa expires.
- **Multiple Entry Visa** - Allows for multiple entries over a 1 month period and can be extended.
- **KAZA Univisa** - A special visa allowing multiple entries between Zimbabwe and Zambia, and day trips into Botswana.

 **Important:** If you **overnight in Botswana**, the KAZA visa becomes invalid and a new one must be purchased.

**Children** - Zimbabwe will charge FULL VISA fees for any individual who is required to have a VISA despite their age. This includes infants and children (who were previously being exempted from this).



**Tip 1:** Visit the [Online Visa Application and Immigration Declaration Form](#) and apply for your visa and fill in the online declaration form



**Tip 2:** Although Visa queues are not terrible, several planes can land at the same time especially around midday. In order to beat the queues, on your incoming flight sit as close to the front of the plane as possible so that you can exit early and be in the queue first.



**Tip 3:** Book a private transfer or take a taxi from the airport into town. If you have listened to my Tip 3 then you will be one of the first to exit customs and immigration but on a normal transfer you might have to still wait for someone else booked on that transfer who is at the back of the queue, which is very frustrating.

**Flying into Livingstone, Zambia and then crossing to Zimbabwe:** If your Nationality requires you to purchase a Zambian visa ([see here](#)) you should purchase a double entry visa for Zambia. One for when you land and one for when you re-enter Zambia to depart. You might also need to buy a Zimbabwe visa, depending on your nationality ([see here](#)).

### Border Post Hours

**Victoria Falls Bridge border post:** Opens 06h00 - Closes 22h00

**Kazungula border post:** Opens 06h00 - Closes 20h00

## National Park Hours

### Victoria Falls National Park – Entrance to the Falls:

All Year Round: Opens 06h00 - Closes 18h00)

### Zambezi National Park: Upper Zambezi

(Summer: Opens 06h00 - Closes 18h00) (Winter: Opens 06h30 - Closes 18h00)

## Entrance Fees to Victoria Falls and Zambezi National Park

Regional and local passport holders are required show proof of nationality. Children Under 12 half price.

### 2025 Entrance Fees to View the Victoria Falls and the rainforest

- International Tourists US\$50
- Regional Tourist US\$30
- Local Tourists US\$7 for citizens and US\$10 for residents
- Night time viewing for International Tourists US\$100
- Night time viewing for Regional Tourist US\$70

### 2025 Entry to Zambezi National park

- International Tourists US\$15
- Regional Tourist US\$12
- Local Tourists \$5
- Vehicles: International/Regional US\$10 and Local \$5
- Trailers: International/Regional US\$10 and Local \$5

## Money

- Credit and Debit cards are accepted by most large establishments but not all, so essential to have some cash on you. (VISA Mainly, but Mastercard as well. Not AMEX or Diners). It is advisable to pay for [accommodation](#) and [activities](#) before you go, to avoid carrying large sums of cash or hefty credit card transaction fees.
- For more up-to-date information on the cash situation in Zimbabwe, please visit this link - [Zimbabwe Currency](#).



**Tip:** Everything is priced in US\$ and this is by far the **best currency** to carry. Rand, Sterling and Pula can be used but will often be exchanged at an **unfavourable rate**. Zimbabwe does not have US\$ coins, change is given in small items, like sweets.



**Tip:** There is no need for an international visitor to buy the local currency ZIG. Rather pay in US\$.

## Safety

Victoria Falls is essentially a very safe travel destination. It has a small population and has experienced no serious security incidents for many years. However petty crime does exist and it is advisable to always be vigilant. This is our advice:

- Keep valuables locked away in your hotel room or with the hotel reception.
- Don't carry large sums of cash and certainly don't flash money about.
- Street vendors will hassle you to buy their curios etc; it is best not to get angry with them. They mean no harm and are actually just desperate for a sale. They are not in anyway dangerous. If you show any slight interest in buying something they won't leave you alone.
- If you are staying at one of the smaller establishments in the residential part of town, don't walk around at night, there are wild animals. Rather catch a taxi.
- **Do NOT try to make deals on accommodation and activities** with dodgy street characters – they will swindle you; stick to the larger companies that have a good reputation.
- Please be very careful when you buy curios and ask for them to be shipped home. We have reports about a certain shop in town which is taking payment and promising to ship items, which then never arrive. Read this post on our website [Southern Africa Gallery](#)
- You will read many reviews from recent travellers on all the travel forums who say they feel very safe when in Victoria Falls, the only concern in fact is the street vendors who hassle you.



**Tip 1:** You will see the **Tourism Police** dotted throughout the town. They wear bright yellow reflective bibs with "Tourism Police" written on it. If you are feeling harassed or uncomfortable walking around ask one of these guys to escort you.



**Tip 2:** If you show any of the street vendors the slightest interest in purchasing an item, they will badger you for ages. If you don't want to buy anything clearly tell them that you are not interested and ask them to leave you alone.

## Health

Victoria Falls Health Bridge (medical centre) is open 24 hours a day. However, the doctor may need to be called at certain times of the day.

[See our map](#) for the clinic's location and [important numbers](#) for contact details. There is also MARS (Medical Air Rescue Services) for emergency evacuation of any serious cases to one of the larger Hospitals in Zimbabwe or South Africa.

The clinic has a resident doctor. They have an X-ray machine and a mini theatre for minor surgery. They also have three wards for overnight patients.

The pharmacies in town ([see town centre map](#)) are reasonably well stocked with medicines and prescriptions. However, if you are on prescription drugs it is always preferable to bring enough with you.

### There are some serious health threats to visitors

- **Malaria** – Please read our website [Malaria Information](#) for full details. Hot and wet summer months (December through till May) are most vulnerable times especially at dawn and dusk. A prophylactic medication is essential and

you should consult your local physician prior to departure. However, if you have arrived and haven't started a course of prophylactic tablets, please visit the clinic or pharmacy asap. Additionally ensure that you use insect repellent and sleep under a mosquito net. Symptoms which are often flu-like occur 10 to 14 days after exposure, so if you feel unwell when you get back home see your doctor immediately and inform him that you have been in a malaria area, specifically mention that the strain *Plasmodium falciparum* also known as Cerebral Malaria occurs here.

- **Water Borne Disease** - can at times be prevalent. The best advice is to drink bottled water ONLY, then you are completely safe.
- **Sun**- The African sun is extremely powerful, please use wide brimmed hats and plenty of sunscreen. Don't underestimate this as it can ruin your holiday.
- **Bilharzia** – Is a snail borne disease which occurs in very slow moving or stagnant water where there is plenty of human habitation. Bilharzia requires humans to complete its life-cycle. Avoid swimming in locations that fit this description.

## Victoria Falls Weather in Brief

- **Winter** (May to Mid-August) is mild and dry. Average high temperatures ranging from 25-27°C (77-81°F) and average lows between 7-10°C (45-50°F). Not a bad winter day!
- **Summer** (Mid-August to end April) is generally hot to very hot and wet during the rainy season (Mid November to April). Average highs between 32-34°C (90-93°F) and average lows between 15-19°C (59-66°F)

For detailed information on the weather including the best times of year to visit, please refer to our website [Victoria Falls Weather](#).

See the Victoria Falls Calendar in this guide which gives more details on temperature, sunrise/sunset and rainfall.

## Fuel

There are a numerous garages in the town centre – Puma, Zuva, Total, Glow and Engen ([see town centre map](#)). Between these, you should always be able to get fuel both diesel and petrol



**Tip:** Pay for fuel with US\$ cash. If you only have SA Rand the conversion rate is often very unfavourable and will end up costing you a lot more money. Garages do NOT accept credit or debit cards.

## Electronics

### Electricity

220 - 240 volt – Square 3 pin 13 amp plugs - same as the UK.

The majority of hotels will either have a variety of plug sockets to fit international plugs or adaptors at reception.

### Cell Phones

- Roaming service is available provided you have activated it through your home cell service provider. The signal is strong around town but can be intermittent due to power cuts and also overloading of the network. Extreme patience is often required as it can take many attempts to make a single call, although this is much improved nowadays.

- The 2 main networks are – Econet and NetOne, in our experience Econet has the broadest and most reliable coverage. Sim cards with local numbers are available and are cheap and easy to purchase. This is a good option as it is much cheaper than a roaming service, especially if you are here for a few days.
- Econet has a large modern internet café/shop in Sopers arcade on Park Way next door to Shearwater. NetOne is at Sawanga Mall along the Bulawayo Road.



**Tip1:** You can buy sim cards and airtime from the cell phone representatives stationed on the streets throughout town. These representatives of which there are plenty wear orange or yellow bibs. However, you then have to register the number which can be a bit of a hassle and take time. If you go into the network shops (detailed above) the sim cards are cheaper and they will register them for you then and there, much easier. Take your passport or ID with you though as this will be required.

## Internet and Telephones

Connecting to the internet these days seems to be one of the most important factors for many people, it certainly is for us due to the nature of our business. You can do this several ways.

- Most accommodation establishments have internet access, many with Free Wi-Fi in the rooms and public areas for their clients ONLY. Check when you book.
- 4G and 5G access is available through the Econet and NetOne network providers. This is reasonably fast internet and is reliable most of the time. Simply buy and register a local sim card from one of the shops (detailed above). Get them to setup your mobile data and buy the airtime from them. Convert the airtime to data bundles as these tend to be cheaper. It is quite an expensive way but at least you have internet access. The larger the bundle, the cheaper they get.
- The telephone system is reasonably reliable and has international dialling capabilities.
- International access code for Victoria Falls + (Country code 263) (Area code 83) followed by the local number.

<http://www.netone.co.zw>

<http://www.econet.co.zw>

## Getting Around

How do I get from A to B is understandably a very common question. You can see several previous [questions and answers here](#).

### Getting from Victoria Falls airport to Victoria Falls town

- If travelling by air, the first thing you need to think about is getting from the **Victoria Falls airport** to town (a distance of about 22kms). Standard airport transfers to any of the hotels in town are relatively cheap (US\$20 pp) and easily arranged ([Enquire here](#)). **See Tip 4** in the visa section of this guide regarding private transfers.
- **Car Rental** is available and vehicles may be picked up from the airport. There are car hire offices inside the airport terminal building. Car hire is expensive, evaluate whether you will actually need one.
- **Taxi** - There are taxis at the airport for every flight. Expect to pay about US\$35 to get into town, if you are a good negotiator you can maybe get this down to about \$25. The taxi obviously carries at least 4 passengers so if you are in a group it is a good option.
- There are no airport shuttles per se, so it is important to have made a plan beforehand or rely on the taxis.

## Getting from Livingstone Airport to Victoria Falls town

- If you are **flying into Livingstone airport, Zambia but staying in Zimbabwe** a transfer can be easily arranged to the Zimbabwe side. The cost is US\$32 pp and the bus will take you through the border between the two countries, hassle free. [Enquire here](#)
- You can also catch a taxi, but in fact you will need to catch 3 taxi's, one from the airport to the Zambian Bridge Border post (+/- 18kms US\$25-\$30) one across the bridge which is no mans land between the border posts (+/- 1.5kms US\$5) and then another taxi from the Zimbabwean border post to your accommodation in Zimbabwe (+/- US\$5 to \$10). Prices are for the whole taxi not per person, taxis are plentiful so it's quite easy, just a bit of a hassle getting your luggage in and out each time.

## In and Around Victoria Falls Town

- Walking – Within the town itself most things are within walking distance of each other ([see town map](#)). We have heard people worrying about their safety from criminals while walking around but honestly, it really is very safe. However it does **get extremely hot during the summer months**, which can make walking exhausting. Street vendors will also approach you to sell their wares. Read our section in this guide on “[Safety](#)” for tips on how to deal with these vendors.

Please be aware of the wild life that you might encounter. Victoria Falls town is surrounded by National Parks and wildlife areas. This is what makes it such a unique and wonderful place, man and animal do co-exist here. Warthogs, monkeys and baboons are plentiful in the town; they generally will not harm you unless you corner them or provoke them. However, the monkeys and baboons have become very skilful at stealing anything that they perceive to be worth eating. So if they are around please be vigilant if you have anything remotely edible on or near you.

Frequently elephants wander into the town centre and the residential area, it is their feeding ground, we are the ones intruding not them ([see stories here](#)). These are totally **wild elephants** and are potentially extremely dangerous, do NOT try to get close to them to take photographs.

Other dangerous game such as lion and buffalo are unlikely to be encountered in the town centre but are seen regularly on the roads leading out of town or to hotels such as Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Elephant Hills Hotel or the A Zambezi River Lodge. Therefore DO NOT walk to these Hotels or even wander to attractions like the BIG TREE. Rather take a taxi, tour or transfer. It always amazes me to see tourists fresh from abroad, wandering along these roads oblivious to the potential dangers, as if it were Hyde Park, meanwhile a herd of 300 buffalo could be around the next corner. Incidents do happen!

- Shuttle Service - There is a free shuttle service that runs hourly from most hotels and lodges to the town centre, the other hotels and the Falls themselves. Ask at your reception.
- Victoria Falls Tours - Another idea is to book a guided tour of the town ([enquire here](#)) this will include trips to the local curio shops and markets as well as other sites of interest.
- Taxis are available and most places you are staying at will call them for you or you will find them in and around town. A fare anywhere is generally \$5 to \$10.
- Bicycles are available for hire in the town centre – Landela Centre ([see map](#)). These cost \$5 for one hour, \$10 for half day or \$20 for a full day. There are no designated bike trails as such.

## Getting to the various activities

- Transport to and from all the Hotels, Lodges and BnB's within Victoria Falls town is provided FREE by all the tour operators for activities booked with them. When you make your activity booking you will be asked which Hotel/Lodge you want to be collected from, then just wait at the reception. The exception to this is the Shearwater High Wire/Bungee jumping off the Victoria Falls Bridge where clients have to make their own way down to the bridge. High wire activities with Wild Horizons include Free transfers.

- For the Lodges out of town, like Elephant camp, Stanley and Livingstone and The Wallow Lodge an additional charge may be levied by the tour operator for collection for an activity from the hotels. However, these establishments themselves normally provide anywhere between 1 and 3 Free transfers per day into town, so just a little planning is necessary.

**N.B.** If you have made your activity bookings through us, on the vouchers and itinerary we provide will be full details of your collection and drop off - including times.



# Shopping

This is a small town focused primarily as one would expect, on tourists. So there is an array of curios shops, arts and crafts, galleries and little boutiques and tasty restaurants. You will not find any multi-national chain stores here.

There are plenty of hotels and in each of these hotels there is normally a couple of curio shops, these shops are invariably quite pricey and you are not able to do any bargaining. So it's a good idea to have a stroll around the town to see what else is on offer.

Please refer to our [Map of the town centre](#) which shows you the various shopping areas. The main shopping centres are Elephants Walk, Landela Centre, Sawanga Mall and the Phumula Centre. Each one of these centres is relatively small but has a selection of curio shops, boutiques, café s, restaurants and service providers.

Very close to [Elephants Walk Centre](#) is the large outdoor curio market, where you will be stunned by the sheer volume of wood carvings, stone sculptures and other forms of exceptionally good art from some very talented artists. ([see here](#))

A lot of people ask **“How much do curios cost?”** quite a difficult question to answer for obvious reasons, but to give you an indication; a copper bangle will cost \$2 to \$5 - a small carving of say a hippo will cost between \$5 and \$10 and a good quality hand sized carving will cost between \$20 and \$50. Prices then range into several thousand dollars dependant on the type of wood or stone and the artists renown. Street and market vendors are always open to bargaining and will start at about 4 times their final price. This however is their living and they are highly skilled at it. Our advice is to pay what you think is fair and what you think the item is worth. Don't rip them off but don't let yourself be ripped off as well.

Please be very careful when you buy curios and ask for them to be shipped home. We have reports about a certain shop in town which is taking payment and promising to ship items, which then never arrive. Read this post on our website [Southern Africa Gallery](#). Rather use the services of DHL or Fedex.

At the entrance gate to the actual Victoria Falls, there are a few curio stalls outside the gate, selling local crafts, then once through the gate there is a well stocked shop selling a variety of items relating to the Falls area including a range of clothing and accessories.

There are three large well stocked supermarkets (OK Supermarket, OK Mart and Pick N Pay) ([see map](#)). Although these are probably not up to international standards, you will certainly be able to get most things you require. These stores close at 8pm daily. In the low density area where some of the lodges are located, there is a “7 to 11” store with your basic grocery needs. Meat is best bought from specialist butcheries located in the industrial area, and at Pumula Centre in the centre of town.

The tour operators like Shearwater and Wild Horizons also have a selection of T-shirts and other merchandise related to the various activities you can do like bungee jumping or rafting. They also sell DVD's and photographs of your trip. These are available at their offices in the town centre.



**Tip 1:** If you are having curios shipped home by a vendor ensure that they are reputable and can show you details of their shipping and handling agents as well as provide documents showing recent shipments. Some vendors are 100% trustworthy and it is therefore not fair to generalise but some outfits just cannot be trusted. If in doubt either get your hotel to give a recommendation on the vendor or organise the shipping yourself through Fedex or DHL ([see map](#)).



**Tip 2:** Some of the street and market curio traders will barter their items for T-shirts, caps or shoes. Bring some of your unused ones from home with you.



**Tip 3:** Most street and market curio traders will always start with their very highest price but are open to negotiation. Depending on your negotiating skills you can often get this price dramatically reduced. Our rule of thumb is to pay what you think is a fair price for the quality of the curio. If you hold out long enough you can get items at a ridiculously low price, but don't rip them off and conversely don't pay too much.

**Here are details of a few unusual shops that stand out and we think are worthwhile visiting.**

**The Larry Norton Art Gallery** - Located in Victoria Falls Hotel (follow the sign boards). [Larry Norton](#) is a world renowned Wildlife artist who now lives in Victoria Falls. Several of his paintings are of Victoria Falls and are displayed in the foyer of the Victoria Falls Hotel. They also sell prints and giclees, which make great gifts or mementos of your holiday. His art is outstanding and the gallery is well worth a visit.

**Stone Dynamics Gallery** - Situated in the gardens of Victoria Falls Hotel have a wide selection of some the best Stone carvings available. This company is reputable and will ship worldwide.

**Prime Art Gallery** – Situated in the Elephants Walk shopping centre ([see map](#)), this gallery has a fine selection of Stone carvings and paintings from some of the most renowned Zimbabwe artists. This company is reputable and will ship worldwide.

**Victoria Falls Guide Online Gift Shop** - We have created some unique gifts which include T-shirts, sweaters, caps, mugs, mouse pads, bags and posters. You can even create your own. These can all be ordered online and can be shipped worldwide. See them here [Victoria Falls Online Gift Shop](#)

**Tammy Walker Gallery** – Situated on Livingstone way, close to the Three Monkey's Restaurant. Has a fantastic selection of Tammy's photographic prints. These are not just normal wildlife photos, they are very artistic. Go and see for yourself, they make great present to take home.

# Eating Out

Since there are so many hotels and lodges in Victoria Falls there are many restaurants to choose from. If you are staying for more than a couple of days you might want to venture further afield than your own hotels restaurants. There are also a few other restaurants dotted around town offering a variety of different foods. More details and reviews can be seen on our website [Victoria Falls Restaurants](#).

Here is a list of a few:

## **Light meals/ café style**

River Brewing Co – Elephant's Walk Mall – cell: 0773 799 896

Shoestrings Café and Take away – Shoestrings Backpackers – 2840167

Brook's Cafe – Elephant's Walk Mall – 0776 724 567

Bridge café – Victoria Falls Bridge - +260 (83) 324231

Rainforest Restaurant – Victoria Falls entrance gate

Marula Café – Livingstone Way – 0774 177 157

[Lookout Café](#) – The Wild Horizons high wire – 2840318

## **A la Carte menu – Family restaurants**

Kasibi Restaurant – Elephant Hills Hotel – 2844793-9 / 2844503-5

Makuwa-kuwa Restaurant – Victoria Falls Safari Lodge – 2843202 -11

Mama Africa Restaurant – Landela Centre – 406257 / cell: 0772 380 430

3 Monkeys Restaurant – Livingstone Way - 2847326

## **A la Carte Menu – Formal dining**

Cassia Restaurant – Ilala Lodge - 2844737-9 / 2844223

The Livingstone Room – Victoria Falls Hotel - 2844490 / 2844593 / 2844883

## **Buffet – Family restaurant**

Amulonga Restaurant – A Zambezi River Lodge – 2844561-3

Jungle Junction – Victoria Falls Hotel – 2844490 / 2844593 / 2844883

Samukele Restaurant – Elephant Hills Hotel - 2844793-9 / 2844503-5

Simujinga Restaurant - Rainbow Hotel – 2844585 / 2845871-4

[The Boma Restaurant](#) - Victoria Falls Safari Lodge – 2843202 / 2843211

### **Take aways**

Chicken Inn / Pizza Inn / Creamy Inn – Food court or take away – Town centre – Park Way

Haefelis - Swiss bakery / coffee shop – Food Court or take away - Town Centre - Park Way

Little Monkey – Breakfast, lunch, snacks, sushi – Take away – Town Centre – Park Way

Nandos Chicken– Eat in or take away - Sawanga Mall – Mosi oa Tunya Way

### **Our Top 5 Dinner Choices**

- Malachite Dinner Cruise – This beautiful double-deck boat offers one of the best dinner cruises on the Zambezi River. Cruise the river enjoying canapes and drinks on the top deck. Then a 4-course dinner is served as the sun goes down. It is especially special on moonlit evenings. Transfers are included.
- Jungle Junction – Superb buffet dinner at the Victoria Falls Hotel. Huge selection of mouthwatering dishes. Entertainment from local traditional dancers.
- Makuwa-Kuwa Restaurant - Award winning dining in Victoria Falls Safari Lodge overlooking their floodlit waterhole.
- Cassia Restaurant – Ilala Lodge well known for its delicious food . A la carte menu which includes some local dishes – piano player and rumblings from the mighty Victoria Falls.
- Marula Café - Central location in town centre on a busy corner serving a delicious dinner menu for the whole family.

### **Our Top 5 Lunch Choices**

- Lookout Café - Outstanding location overlooking the dramatic gorges and Zambezi river below. This is where Wild horizons conduct their high wire activities – tasty food at a very reasonable price – very good value. Requires a short walk to get to from either the Victoria Falls entrance gate or Victoria Falls Hotel.
- Three Monkeys – This restaurant and cocktail bar is partly a beautifully restored 1935 Railway carriage from the Rhodesian times, and partly a covered wood deck perfect for the summer days. It is located near the Victoria Falls Station and Elephant's Walk shopping mall. Excellent food. Lovely atmosphere.
- Marula Café – Central location in town centre on a busy corner serving a really tasty light food menu.
- Brook's Cafe – Elephants Walk shopping centre. It is a nice spot for breakfast and lunch, with a lovely selection of teas and drinks. Plus you can also do some peaceful curio shopping.
- [Dusty Road](#) – Located right in the oldest township of Victoria Falls is the Dusty Road Township Experience - a unique traditional dining experience and food is cooked the Zimbabwean way, on open fires and in cast iron pots and ovens, giving you an authentic, wholesome and tasty food experience.

### **Entertainment Night Spots**

All the hotels and lodges have their own bars, some have their own entertainment laid on. Apart from that there is not a huge amount of night life activity for those of you wanting to have a good party, but listed below are the few local places one can go for a bit of fun.

**Shoestrings** - located close to the town centre ([see map](#)) is a vibrant backpackers lodge, licensed till midnight. This is by far the most popular place for the mostly young or young at heart travellers to go. There is a bar, casual restaurant, pool table and satellite TV. Live entertainment is often available from drummers and musicians to fire jugglers. If you have any special talents they will encourage you to perform. After the bar closes at midnight musicians often gather to jam the night away. Very laid back and good fun.

**The River Brewing Co** – Located at Elephant's Walk Shopping Mall, The Brewery is refurbished in one of the oldest buildings right in the centre of town. It resonates of a steel brewery yet has an inviting atmosphere. As the name suggests, The River Brewing Co serves first class craft beer freshly brewed behind the bar. They occasionally have live entertainment from some of Victoria Falls' talent, as well as artists from other towns and cities.

## Victoria Falls Calendar

Month	Seasonal Shift	What's happening	Sunrise /Sunset	Ave Temp C	River Level Rain
Jan	Height of rainy season; hot and humid with thunderstorms and torrential downpours; Can get several days of continuous rain; Victoria Falls becomes more intense with increased river flow. White water rafting will normally change to the high water run.	Thick vegetation growth; animals disperse widely across the veld, therefore not the best time for game viewing; rainforest very damp; most rainforest flowers in bloom; grass at its most nutritious; lots of bird activity as many nestlings are raised.	05h53 18h58	Min 18 C Max 30 C	Medium to Low  Ave Days Rain 14
Feb	Hot days and warm nights, plenty of rain; "the smoke that thunders" (spray from the falls) rises high in the sky; most of the rainforest is under constant shower; river level rises significantly. High water white water rafting run.	Dramatic bush growth because of the rains: foliage dense; African ebony trees come into fruit; Waterbuck breeding season; many nursery herds evident in Zambezi national park.	06h10 18h51	Min 18 C Max 29 C	High Water  Ave Days Rain 10
March	Hot days and warm nights; rainy season coming to an end but river levels very high and Falls are pumping furiously. Rafting often closes due to high water levels.	Migrant birds start to depart; Kudu and buffalo breeding peak; grasslands in full seed; Baobab trees start to bear fruit	06h19 18h31	Min 17 C Max 30 C	High Water peak  Ave Days Rain 7
April	End of rainy season, but the water from the catchment area upstream in Zambia has arrived; Victoria Falls at its highest flow with an average of 500 million litres of water per minute. Highest ever recorded was 700 million litres in 1958.	Most animals in peak condition at the end of the rainy season, due to the volume of food available; impala, wildebeest and warthog rutting season; final departure of migrant birds	06h26 18h07	Min 14 C Max 29 C	High Water Peak  Ave Days Rain 2
May	Beginning of Autumn; days are warm to hot with a chill coming into the evening air; Zambezi flowing strongly despite advent of the dry season	Deciduous trees begin to lose their leaves; best month for fishing in the Zambezi; white backed vulture breeding season; wild dogs breed.	06h35 17h51	Min 10 C Max 27 C	High Water  Ave Days Rain 1
June	Autumn gives way to winter; warm to hot days, dry weather, chilly at night; Zambezi river levels drops. The Falls are still very full with lots of spray.	Raptor courtship displays more evident; game starts to become concentrated near water as the grass cover recedes	06h45 17h49	Min 6 C Max 25 C	High Water  Ave Days Rain 0

Month	Seasonal Shift	What's happening	Sunrise /Sunset	Ave Temp C	River Level Rain
July	Height of dry season coincides with mid winter: days on the whole are still warm, but you can get a cold spell creeping in for a few days; nights are very chilly; definitely bring something warm; no rain. Zambezi level is dropping, and Falls now have less spray.	Elephants migrate to winter pastures; raptor breeding season; mopane leaves begin taking on their distinctive winter hue of burnt orange.	06h48 17h57	Min 6 C Max 25 C	High to Mid Water Ave Days Rain 0
Aug	Dry, warm days and cool nights; sometimes windy, signalling a shift in the seasons; Eastern cataract in Zambia often becomes exposed due to low water levels of the Zambezi	Increase in Elephant population on Zambian side of river, which is the winter feeding ground for elephants from northern Zimbabwe and Botswana.	06h36 18h06	Min 8 C Max 28 C	Mid to Low Water Ave Days Rain 0
Sept	Spring brings noticeable increase in temperatures; hot days, nights becoming warmer; excellent white water rafting as the water levels drop and rapids become exposed. Great time to see the Falls.	First migrant birds arrive from Europe and elsewhere in Africa; weavers begin breeding; knob thorn acacia trees begin flowering indicating a change in season.	06h12 18h12	Min 13 C Max 32 C	Mid to Low Water Ave Days Rain 1
Oct	Hottest month of the year, often known as suicide month because it is so hot; building up towards the start of the rainy season, with the occasional storm taking the edge off the heat; eastern cataract usually dry. White water rafting still excellent.	Breeding plumage appears in certain birds and heightened courtship displays; marulas in flower; long tail cassias display beautiful yellow flowers; new mopane leaf growth.	05h48 18h17	Min 17 C Max 33 C	Low Water Ave Days Rain 4
Nov	Usually the start of the rainy season although rains may be late or early; days are very hot and nights are warm; Victoria Falls is at its lowest ahead of the upstream rainy season. White water rafting still excellent	Baobab trees in flower; mopane trees exhibit new growth; blood lilies in flower; white gardenia flowers are out; elephants begin to disperse back to Zimbabwe and Chobe; impala calving season; more migrant birds arrive; dramatic increase in insect activity.	05h33 18h30	Min 18 C Max 32 C	Low Water Ave Days Rain 8
Dec	Hot and humid as the rainy season works towards its peak; cooler than October because of cloud cover; Can get several days of continuous rain; Falls are still quite low but levels are starting to rise with rains from the localised catchment area. Eastern cataract still exposed. White water rafting still excellent.	The Lwindii ancestral worship ceremony at the Falls; dragonflies at their most active in the rainforest; flame lily and other rainforest flowers in bloom; wildebeest breeding season	05h36 18h48	Min 18 C Max 30 C	Low Water Ave Days Rain 13



# Accommodation

There is a wide variety of accommodation in Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) to suit most budgets.

We have created a [quick reference table](#) on our website which lists most of your options. We hope you find it useful, when making your decision on where to stay.

Don't forget to have a look at the [Accommodation Page](#) on our website for much more detail. For each establishment we also have a dedicated web page.

You can read or write reviews on any of the accommodation by [clicking here](#)

A map of Victoria Falls detailing the locations of hotels and lodges can be found [here](#).

For discounted hotel and lodge stays, visit our [special offers](#) page.

Please contact us via this [enquiry form](#) for the latest specials available or if you would like us to make a hotel reservation for you.

## Activities

Some people quite understandably think they would rather wait till they get to Victoria Falls before deciding what to do, they possibly feel that they will get a better understanding of what is available once their feet are on the ground.

However, if you can try to figure out what you want to do before leaving home, it's best to pre-book and pay online before you go, this has some distinct advantages:-

- It will save you enormous time and frustration. Once you are at the Falls you will find that there are innumerable booking agents all scrambling for your booking. You will be approached on the street by vendors asking you to come to their booking office. This is where it gets confusing because you don't know who operates what, who you are going with or comparative prices. You really don't want to be spending your valuable holiday time planning your itinerary or traipsing around the various booking agencies trying to get the best deal. When you can do the research from the comfort of your own home.
- Many people think it will be cheaper when you get there. It's NOT, the operators have set prices and packages and they just don't discount to walk-in customers. Most online agents offer exactly the same prices as agents/operators in Victoria Falls itself. In some cases even cheaper. Generally prices are pretty consistent across all the operators, on the whole they do not undercut each other.
- Some activities do get fully booked, if you leave it to the last moment you might NOT be able to get onto your chosen activity at your preferred time or day.
- Some activities and transfers will only run with a minimum of 2 or 4 people. Therefore, if you arrive on the day hoping to book, you might be disappointed that they can't run the trip for you. By booking in advance this problem is often alleviated.
- If you are planning on doing several activities your online agent **should** also be able to advise you on the best package price for combined activities which can save you a lot of money.
- It saves you having to worry about payment when you are there. Not all companies accept credit cards so you either have to draw cash from the ATM or take money with you, it's much **easier and cheaper** to pay before you go and all you have to do is carry the vouchers.



**Tip 1:** Booking several activities together in a package will save you considerable money. See [package prices](#)



**Tip 2:** [Activities in Zambia](#) are quite a lot more expensive than doing the same activity in Zimbabwe.



**Tip 3:** Pre-book your activities, by doing so you will not be disappointed with activities being full or time slots not available. It can take us days sometimes to get an itinerary exactly right for someone, you don't want to be wasting your holiday doing this, you want to be relaxing knowing that everything is organised.



**Tip 4:** Find an online agent who knows **Vic Falls well** and who will offer you activities from **ALL the operators**, so they don't just sell their product but rather make sure that you get what's best for you.



**Tip 5:** Get your online agent to organize an itinerary for you, Thereby maximizing your time. With their local knowledge of each activity they can package it together nicely so you are not rushed off your feet trying to get from one activity to the next.



**Tip 6: Very important** – on many of the morning activities the pick up time is before breakfast is served at your hotel. So it is advisable to tell your hotel the night before that you will be leaving early and they will do a packed breakfast for you. Some activities will include a breakfast or light snacks a little later, some nothing at all (like helicopter rides).

There are a wide range of activities in Victoria Falls – Africa's Adventure Capital. These range from serene scenic experiences and impressive wildlife viewing to heart-pumping adrenaline adventures above and below the Zambezi River gorge as well as at the edge the Falls.

So in order to simplify it for you we have broken activities down into five sections so you can clearly see what's on offer:

1. **Adrenaline and Adventure** – e.g. Bungee jumping off the Victoria Falls Bridge, White-water rafting down the Zambezi River, Swimming in the Devils Pool on the edge of the Victoria Falls.
2. **Wildlife and Safari** – e.g. Game-viewing on the Chobe River and in the nearby Chobe National Park in Botswana, Walking safaris and Horse-back safaris in the Zambezi National Park in Zimbabwe.
3. **Guided and Scenic Tours** – e.g. Guided tours of the Victoria Falls, Zambezi River cruises from breakfast to sunset and dinner cruises, Flights above the Falls in helicopter or microlight, Steam train trips.
4. **Cultural Activities** – e.g. Boma Experience with traditional meals singing and dancing, village and township tours.
5. **Specialised Safaris** – e.g. Fishing, or Art and elephant experience.

In addition to activities found in Victoria Falls, we have put together discounted packages just for you which you can find [here](#).

You will find details on the activities on our website via our [Victoria Falls Activities](#) page. Also, a price list of all the activities can be found [here](#). You will also have an activities price list available with this package.

It goes without saying that the main activity here is to see and experience The Victoria Falls. This Waterfall is awe inspiring and is justifiably considered a Natural Wonder of the World. Words are inadequate to describe its beauty.

Once you have made your booking, you will be issued with a voucher. Your tour operator will pick you up from your Hotel or Lodge at the specified time for your booking. Simply wait at the reception with vouchers in hand and you will be collected and then returned at the end of your trip.

## Other Things to Do and See

These things below are not promoted by tour operators as main activities. Many of them are Free and are purely our personal suggestions, from a local viewpoint, if you have a few hours to spare here and there. It just gives you an overview of everything, just so that you don't think you have missed out on something special.

- **Traditional High Tea** – Served on the Stanley Terrace at Victoria Falls Hotel with spectacular views of the Victoria Falls Bridge and the Victoria Falls themselves.
- **Larry Norton Art Gallery in Victoria Falls Hotel** - Larry is an internationally renowned wildlife artist, several of his masterpieces depict Victoria Falls. Included in your purchase of this guide is a 10% discount voucher for this Art Gallery for any Prints and Giclées.
- **Savannah Wood** – Fine quality solid wood furniture manufactured from recycled teak railways sleepers. Located in industrial sites ([see map](#))
- **Jafuta Heritage Centre** – This small museum at Elephant's Walk houses a private collection of material cultural and visual Zimbabwean artifacts. It allows the visitor to explore some of the tribes and history of the country and if they wish, to discuss aspects of this with our curator, Ephraim Sithole who is also the local N'anga and he can throw the bones for you as well!
- **Curio market** – situated behind the Elephants walk shopping centre ([see map](#)) there is a jaw dropping quantity of all sorts of curios from some extremely talented artists
- **Stone sculptures** - Stone Dynamics at Victoria Falls Hotel; although you will find lots of stone carvings at the curio markets and other shops, this Gallery has a selection of really world class sculptors, and is a trustworthy company to ship worldwide.
- **The Big Tree** – ([see map](#)) this enormous Baobab tree was a historical landmark, meeting place and camp-site for pioneers in the early days. This impressive specimen is 16m around the trunk, 20m high and estimated to be a couple of thousand years old.
- **Golf at the Elephant Hills Hotel** – Designed by the legendary Gary Player, this was once a championship golf course and although now run down slightly, it is still well worth playing or even going for a walk on. Set in the beautiful lush Zambezi riverine bush, you will find yourself playing amongst herds of Impala, Waterbuck and Warthog which is quite a unique experience.
- **Vulture feeding** – Each day at 1pm the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge offers a free vulture feeding display. Meat is put out just below the decks of the Buffalo Bar at the Hotel which attracts hundreds of vultures and other birds of prey. Have a drink or lunch and sit back and witness this incredible spectacle.
- **Game viewing** – apart from going on a specialized game drive, you can also visit the Victoria Fall Safari Lodge which overlooks its own waterhole. Have a drink at the Buffalo bar or grab a bite to eat whilst watching the animals come down to drink. There is almost always some animal activity; regulars include warthog, buffalo, kudu and impala. The waterhole is also floodlit and at night hyenas are sometimes seen and even lion on occasions.
- **Mapopoma Bar in the Elephant Hills Hotel** – Enjoy a drink from this lofty bar which has a magnificent panoramic view over the Golf Course, Zambezi River and Zambia. You can also see the spray from the mighty Victoria Falls rising like smoke on the skyline.
- **Rainbow Hotel** – has a unique bar built into the pool. Enjoy a drink on a hot day whilst sitting waist deep in water on your bar stool.

## Fast Facts

- Falls width 1708 meters
- Maximum height 108 meters (Rainbow falls)
- Lowest height 62 meters (Devil's cataract)
- Highest water flow (March /April) approximately 500 million litres per minute
- Lowest water flow (Late November/ early December) Approximately 10 million litres per minute
- Greatest ever flow recorded March 1958 – 700 million litres per minute

## The Formation of the Victoria Falls

About 150 to 200 million years ago large amounts of volcanic magma were extruded in the Victoria Falls area. This magma (Basalt Rock) cooled quickly developing enormous cracks or faults as it met with the cooler air and water. Then due to shifts of the earth's plates and much higher rainfall, the whole area became submerged under a huge freshwater lake.

During this period these large fault lines were filled with mainly sand deposits, time and pressure hardened the sand to form sandstone. Later Tectonic movements (earthquakes) caused the lake to drain and the Zambezi River changed its course and found its present day route to the Indian Ocean.

The strong erosive action of the river found the first of these sandstone fault lines some 150 000 years ago. The water eroded through the softer sandstone quicker than through the hard basalt rock therefore forming the first waterfall.

Over the next 150 000 years the river slowly eroded 7 of these fault lines and each one would have been a different waterfall from the one we know today. The current day waterfall is on the 8<sup>th</sup> fault line.

The ninth waterfall has already started cutting back through the next fault line. This can be seen to the side of the Devil's Cataract through Cataract Island. This large east-north-east fault line across the river is where the next full width falls will form.

What's amazing is that archaeological diggings have shown that early man lived in this region some 200 000 years ago, meaning that they would have seen the very first set of Falls that were formed. Therefore, man has witnessed over time this extraordinary change in the landscape.

## Size and flow rate chart of Victoria Falls compared to Niagara and Iguazu

Parameters	Victoria Falls		Niagara Falls		Iguazu Falls	
Height in metres/feet	108m	360ft	51m	167ft	64-82m	210-269ft
Width in metres/feet	1708m	5603ft	1203m	3947ft	2700m	8858ft
<b>Flow rate units (vol/sec)</b>	<b>m<sup>3</sup>/s</b>	<b>cu ft/s</b>	<b>m<sup>3</sup>/s</b>	<b>cu ft/s</b>	<b>m<sup>3</sup>/s</b>	<b>cu ft/s</b>
Mean annual flow rate	1088	38422	2406	85000	1745	61659
Highest recorded flow	12600	444965	8264	292000	12792	452000

## Victoria Falls Bridge

Cecil John Rhodes had a vision of a railway line stretching from Cape Town to Cairo. The Zambezi River was just one of the huge obstacles that would have to be overcome to accomplish this feat. He initiated plans for the first bridge across the mighty Zambezi River at Victoria Falls and was insistent that the bridge should be built in a place that the spray from the Falls would be felt by passengers on the passing trains.

The Victoria Falls bridge was completed in April 1905, and although this was the brainchild of [Cecil John Rhodes](#) he died in 1902 before its completion.

The main credit for designing the Victoria Falls Bridge must go to **George Andrew Hobson** of London based consultants **Sir Douglas Fox and Partners**, not as is often stated, **Sir Ralph Freeman**, who designed the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge. At the time of the design of the Victoria Falls Bridge, Freeman was still only an assistant in the firm, although he was involved in calculating the preliminary stresses involved with the steelwork design and was credited by Hobson for his involvement. Sir Douglas Fox and Partners later became Freeman, Fox and Partners.

This magnificent bridge 650ft long, spans the Batoka gorge. The height from low water level to the rails on the bridge is 420ft. The famous view of the Bridge with the Falls behind it is best seen from the view point just below Victoria Falls Hotel. Today you may well see tourists bungee jumping from the bridge.

We highly recommend the [Historical Bridge Tour](#) (see the activity fact file for details) which gives an in depth perspective of this historic bridge allowing you the opportunity to become immersed in the fascinating history of this area and the incredible engineering feat of this construction at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A trip to Victoria Falls without it is incomplete.

The name given to the steam trains puffing along the tracks in Africa were “shongololos” In the local language this means centipede. This was apt given their unusual appearance to anything witnessed by the local people before.

# Tour Of The Falls

## Introduction to the Falls

It always amazes us somewhat to see the number of visitors that travel half way around the world and then spend only an hour or so at the Waterfall, rushing along, mostly in a photographic trance, trying to get the best photograph, not really taking in this spectacle which is a Natural Wonder of the World.

There is also so much more here than just a waterfall; the rainforest which has constant rain 24/7 from the never ending spray of the Falls, has become its own ecosystem. It is a botanists dream and bird lovers paradise. There are species here that don't occur anywhere else, and our recommendation is to look just a little beyond the pathway and the numerous viewpoints.

We have tried to write this guide putting our minds into someone visiting here for the very first time, aware that they have very little idea of what they are about to witness.

The object is to make it as interesting as possible, our suggestion would be to print this chapter and place it in a plastic cover that you can take with you into the rainforest. It will get ruined from the incessant rain, but the beauty is you can just print out another one, unlike an expensive book.

Before starting it is worth remembering a few facts. Most importantly is that Victoria Falls is part of a Protected Nature Reserve and therefore care must be taken to treat it with respect adhering to the rules and the pathways provided so as not to damage the finely balanced ecosystem. As the old saying goes take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but foot prints.

One of the beauties is that the area has not become over commercialized. In fact, once you are standing by the Falls your view will not be much different to that of David Livingstone's who saw the Falls in 1855. There are a few buildings on the Zambian side, but if you get your angles right you can blot these out.

Make your way to the entrance gate where you pay to get in. Here there are toilets and information boards about the Falls and Zimbabwe. There is a restaurant and curio shop plus a couple of drink vending machines; this is the only place that you are able to purchase drinks, so if you haven't brought your own and you plan on spending a few hours here it's a good idea to stock up. The walk is a couple of kilometres and it does get very hot. There are two drinking water taps on route, one is close by this entrance and the other is at Livingstone's Statue.

The pathway system has been well designed to take you to the best viewing points. There is no need to go off the pathway; in fact it is illegal to do so. Some viewpoints have only a few thorny branches acting as a barrier between you and the gorge, 100m below. The onus is on you to be careful and diligent, your life depends on it. In this regard it is unique and wonderful; if these Falls were anywhere in the first world there would be metal and concrete barriers all around to protect you from falling, but these in turn would spoil the natural aesthetics. There is a low metal barrier at the Danger Point as this part usually has very slippery rocks.

Do Not Forget that there is spray 24/7 so the rocks are very slippery. Extreme caution and appropriate footwear should be worn. On New Years Eve 2005 a South African tourist fell to his death by Rainbow Falls. He was taking photographs and accidentally dropped his spectacles. As he bent down to recover them he slipped on the rocks, lost his footing and fell into the gorge.

It is worthwhile noting here that the Falls vary considerably throughout the year depending on the levels of the Zambezi river. See our [Victoria Falls Calendar](#)

In mid December the river starts to rise with the onset of the rainy season and this high water continues right through until about June. During this time the volume of water plummeting over the Falls is enormous, there will be lots of spray

and you will get very wet, camera equipment etc. needs to be protected. If you don't want to get wet take a raincoat. However, it is somewhat of a cleansing experience to get soaked to the skin by these magnificent Falls. Generally the weather is hot to very hot and the cool spray is very welcoming. On overcast cold days it would be a different story.

In June the flood waters start to recede and by September the Falls are quite dry and by November many parts of the Falls have actually dried up completely. Main Falls and Devils Cataract are the only sections still flowing.

## Helpful Links

### Newsletter

Sign up for our newsletter [here](#).

### Accommodation

Find Accommodation in [Victoria Falls](#), [Hwange](#), [Kariba](#), [Mana Pools](#), [Matopos](#), [Livingstone](#) (Zambia), [Chobe](#) (Botswana) or [Okavango Delta](#) (Botswana).

### Activities & Events

You will find Victoria Falls activities [here](#). For annual events, [click here](#).

### Maps

Get detailed locations of places in our Google maps for [Victoria Falls](#), [Livingstone](#), [Hwange](#), [Mana Pools](#), and [Chobe](#) (Botswana).

On our website, you can find the Town Area Map as well as our Town Centre Map on our [Maps Page](#).